

Amendments to the Drawings

The attached replacement sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 3. This sheet, which includes Fig. 3, replaces the original sheet including those same Figures.

The replacement drawing sheet of Fig. 3 shows a discharge belt 102 as described in the specification and suggested by the Examiner in the Office Action dated April 22, 2005. This change to Fig. 3 is fully supported by the original disclosure and does not add new matter.

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1-7 and 10-20 are now present in this application. Claims 1, 13 and 17 are independent. By this reply, claims 8-9 have been cancelled and new claims 10-20 have been added to clarify the invention according to U.S. practice.

Amendments have been made to the claims and the drawings. Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

I. Priority Under 35 U.S.C. § 119

Applicant thanks the Examiner for acknowledging Applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119, and receipt of the certified priority document.

II. Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner has objected to the drawings because they fail to show a discharge belt 102 as described in the specification.

In order to overcome this objection, Applicant is concurrently submitting Replacement Drawing Sheet for the Examiner's approval, which address each

of the deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, 2nd Paragraph

Claims 1-9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. These claims have been reviewed and revised to clarify the invention. For instance, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that a gap refers to a gap between a conveying roller and a second separating roller. Claim 2 has been amended to clarify that a gap refers to a gap between a conveying roller and a first/second separating roller. Claim 3 has been amended to clarify that a gap refers to a gap between a second separating roller and a second conveying roller. Other concerns raised by the Examiner have been fixed. Accordingly, the claims are in full compliance with 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, and thus the rejection should be withdrawn.

IV. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 3-4 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Ariga (GB 2132737). This rejection, insofar as it pertains to the presently pending claims, is respectfully traversed.

Regarding independent claim 1, Ariga discloses feed rollers 6a and 6b for conveying a paper sheet 'P' while being rotated, takeout rollers 7a, 7b and 7c

rotatably disposed at a lower side of the feed rollers 6a and 6b, and gate rollers 17a and 17b disposed to contact with the takeout rollers 7a, 7b and 7c to prevent more than one paper sheet P from being taken out at a time. In Ariga, the feed rollers 6a and 6b merely convey the paper sheet 'P', irrespective of a function of separating media one by one, and actually, the paper sheet 'P' is separated one by one according to the frictional force generated when the media passes an area between the takeout rollers 7a, 7b and 7c and the gate rollers 17a and 17b.

In clear contrast, in Applicant's embodied invention, the media is separated one by one through a frictional contact provided due to an overlap between the conveying rollers and the first separating rollers, and is separated one by one according to the frictional force between the conveying rollers and the second separating rollers. That is, the media is first separated one by one by the overlap between the conveying rollers and the first separating rollers, and then is separated again one by one according to the frictional force between the conveying rollers and the second separating rollers, so that the one by one separation of the media is more precisely performed.

Therefore, Ariga does not teach at least "first separating roller arranged with overlaps to the conveying rollers to separate the media one by one" as recited in independent claim 1, since Ariga teaches a media separation only by the frictional force between the takeout rollers 7a, 7b and 7c and the gate

rollers 17a and 17b.

Accordingly, independent claim 1 and its dependent claims (due to their dependency) are patentable over the applied reference, and thus the rejection is improper and must be withdrawn.

Since claims 2 and 5-9 have not been rejected over any prior art of record, these claims should be indicated as allowable over the prior art of record.

V. Additional Cited References

Since the remaining references cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but have merely been cited to show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

VI. Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone

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Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachment(s): Replacement Drawing Sheet (Fig. 3)